

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OPIC-03 XMB-02 STR-04

/088 W

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R 102135Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1152

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 3976

GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PFOR, HO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH EX-MINLAB FONSECA

BEGIN SUMMARY: POLOFF HAD CONVERSATION WITH EX-MINLAB FONSECA ON SEPTEMBER 9. FONSECA SAID GOH HAS ABANDONED POSITION THAT HONDURAS COULD ONLY REENTER A RESTRUCTURED COMMON MARKET AFTER A PEACE TREATY HAS BEEN NEGOTIATED WITH EL SALVADOR. THE NEW POSITION WILL ALLOW HONDURAS TO NEGOTIATE AND SIGN A COMMON MARKET AGREEMENT WHILE ENTERING A RESERVATION TO THE TREATY WHICH WOULD STATE THAT THE AGREEMENT IN NO WAY ALTERS ITS BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH EL SALVADOR. HE SAID THAT FONMIN GALVEZ WAS DOING NOTHING TO FURTHER A SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE WITH EL SALVADOR AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REPLACE HIM. FONSECA BELIEVES THAT LT. COLONEL MARIO MALDONADO, HEAD OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM INSTITUTE (INA), WILL FAIL IN
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HIS ATTEMPT TO IMPLEMENT AGRARIAN REFORM. HE STATED THAT THE MODERATE NORTH COAST UNION LEADERSHIP IS UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE WHICH COULD ULTIMATELY END IN THE BREAKDOWN OF THE PRESENT UNION STRUCTURE IN THAT AREA. END SUMMARY.

1. POLOFF HAD LONG CONVERSATION WITH EX-MINLAB GAUTAMA FONSECA ON SEPTEMBER 9. FONSECA SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN HIRED BY THE CACM SECRETARIAT (SIECA) TO WCT AS AN ADVISOR TO THE HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE (AN). HE REMARKED THAT HE ATTENDED THE CAN MEETING IN GUATEMALA ON SEPTEMBER 1-3.

2. FONSECA SAID THAT THE GOH COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH DEVELOPING GOVERNMENT POLICY ON CAN NEGOTIATIONS HAD DECIDED TO ABANDON ITS POSITION THAT HONDURAS COULD ENTER A RESTRUCTURED COMMON MARKET ONLY AFTER A PEACE TREATY HAS BEEN NEGOTIATED WITH EL SALVADOR. HE SAID THE NEW POSITION IS THAT HONDURAS WOULD SIGN A COMMON MARKET TREATY WITHOUT A SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE WITH EL SALVADOR; HOWEVER, IT WOULD ENTER A RESERVATION TO THE TREATY STATING THAT THE TREATY IN NO WAY ALTERS ITS BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH EL SALVADOR. FONSECA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE OTHER SIGNATORIES WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT SUCH A RESERVATION. HE OBSERVED THAT GUATEMALA IS THE CHIEF STUMBLING BLOCK AT PRESENT IN CAN NEGOTIATIONS, BUT SAID HE BELIEVED IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO DEAL SUCCESSFULLY WITH GUATEMALAN OBJECTIONS IN THE COMING CAN SESSION IN OCTOBER.

2. FONSECA SAID THAT FONMIN GALVEZ WAS "NOT DOING A THING" TO PROMOTE A SETTLEMENT OF THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH EL SALVADOR. HE SAID THAT GALVEZ SHOULD BE REPLACED, AND REMARKED THAT EX-FONMIN BATRES IS THE BEST MAN FOR THE POSITION. HE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT BATRES DOES NOT WANT TO BECOME MINISTER AGAIN.

3. HE REMARKED THAT LT. COLONEL MARIO MALDONADO, DIRECTOR OF INA (NATIONAL AGRARIAN INSTITUTE), IS PRESSING FOR AGRARIAN REFORM, BUT IS HAMPERED BY THE POOR PERSONNEL AND STRUCTURE OF THE INA ORGANIZATION. HE COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT MALDONADO PERSONALLY, AND INA AS AN ORGANIZATION, WOULD FAIL BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL BASE TO CARRY OUT THE REFORM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. HE RECONFIDENTIAL

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MARKED THAT THE INA STAFF CAN'T EVEN DRAFT UNDERSTANDABLE REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW AND MENTIONED THAT TWO SECTIONS OF THE REGULATIONS ARE STILL UNCOMPLETED. HE SAID MALDONADO IS THE ONLY OFFICIAL WHO GIVES THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT A "POPULAR" IMAGE.

4. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE RECENT WALKOUT AT THE SITRATERCO (UNITED BRANDS UNION) CONGRESS WAS THE RESULT OF PRESSURES THAT HAVE BEEN BUILDING FOR A LONG TIME. HE SAID THE PRESENT MODERATE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN LOSING TOUCH WITH THE RANK AND FILE AND SOME OF THE PRESENT LEADERS HAVE LEFT THEMSELVES OPEN TO SHARGES OF CORRUPTION AND OF BEING IN LEAGUE WITH THE COMPANY. HE ADDED THAT GALE, CELEO

GONZALEZ (PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH COAST FEDERATION FESITRANH) AND OBDULIO CACERES (NEW PRESIDENT OF SITRATERCO) WERE NOT WILLING TO COMPROMISE WITH THE DIS- SIDENT GROUP OR TO DEAL WITH THEIR COMPLAINTS. HE SAID THAT A CONTINUANCE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION WOULD LEAD TO EITHER A LOSS OF CONTROL BY THE MODERATES OR THE BREAK- UP OF THE UNION INTO SMALLER UNITS. HE ADMITTED THAT THE COMMUNISTS WERE PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT PART WITHIN THE DIS- SIDENT GROUP AND ARE CAPITALIZING ON RANK AND FILE DIS- CONTENT WITH THE LEADERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN TO OUR POSITION

FONSECA ESTIMATED THAT THE PRESENT MODERATE LEADERSHIP WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO INCREASINGLY HEAVY PRESSURE WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 3976

GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP

5. FONSECA SAID THAT THE LIBERAL AND NATIONALIST PARTIES WERE NOT BEING RESPONSIVE TO THE TIMES. HE SAID THAT THEIR CALL FOR A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY IS MEANINGLESS UNLESS THEY CAN PRESENT MEANINGFUL PROGRAMS TO THE EMERGING SECTORS OF HONDURAN SOCIETY. HE SAID THAT RICARDO ZUNIGA AGUSTINUS, LEADER OF THE NATIONALISTS, AND MODESTO RODAS ALVARADO, LEADER OF THE LIBERALS, ARE CONCERNED ONLY WITH GAINING POWER. HE REMARKED THAT UNLESS THE PARTIES CHANGE THEIR LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOP NEW PLATFORMS THEY WILL BE INDEFINITELY SIDELINED FROM THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

6. FONSECA OBSERVED THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT LACKS A LEADER AND A DEFINITE IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK. HE SAID THAT THE LT. COLONELS WERE NOT THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE WHEN THEY OVERTHREW GENERAL LOPEZ, AND ONLY BELATEDLY RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEMS OF GOVERNING HONDURAS AFTER THEY TOOK POWER. HE OBSERVED THAT THERE IS NO UNITY AMONG THE LT. COLONELS
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AND THAT PERSONAL AMBITION COULD EASILY LEAD TO A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE NEW FUTURE.

7. FONSECA'S STATEMENT CONCERNING THE CHANGE IN THE GOH'S ATTITUDE ABOUT SIGNING A COMMON MARKET AGREEMENT PRIOR TO A TREATY WITH EL SALVADOR WAS CONFIRMED BY FONMIN GALVEZ IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR SEPTEMBER 9.

8. COMMENT: THE CHANGED PUBLIC POLICY STANCE OF THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT MAKES PROSPECTS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION OF A COMMON MARKET TREATY CONSIDERABLY BRIGHTER, IF IN FACT THIS CHANGE HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO AND APPROVED BY THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL, A POINT ON WHICH WE ARE NOT YET SURE. AS THE EMBASSY HAS REPORTED, THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW POLICY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A REALISTIC OPTION FOR THE GOH. THE RESERVATION WOULD ALLOW HONDURAS TO MAINTAIN ITS BORDER POSITION VIS-A-VIS EL SALVADOR BUT ITS SIGNATURE OF THE TREATY WOULD PERMIT IT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMON MARKET STRUCTURE. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT HONDURAN PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMON MARKET WOULD REDUCE OUTSIDE PRESSURES FOR

A SETTLEMENT OF THE BORDER ISSUE. HOWEVER, THE CONDITION OF BEING INVOLVED IN A RESTRUCTURED MARKET CULD, OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, MAKE A BORDER SETTLEMENT MORE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH COUNTRIES. IT IS UNCLEAR AT THIS POINT WHETHER TRADE BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD BE RENEWED AND, IF SO, IN WHAT CONTEXT. THE HONDURAN DECISION HAS REMOVED ONE OF THE BASIC OBSTACLES HINDERING THE EVENTUAL CONCLUSION OF A COMMON MARKET AGREEMENT AND, AS SUCH, SHOULD SERVE TO REASSURE THE OTHER CA COUNTRIES ABOUT HONDURAN COMMITMENT TO THE POLICY OF INTEGRATION.
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